



WEST CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

Police Chiefs Association

PRESS RELEASE

In November 2013, the West Contra Costa County Narcotic Team (West-NET) comprised of ten local agencies and supervised by a California Department of Justice Task Force Commander, teamed with the Federal Bureau of Investigation to conclude a two year investigation of a criminal enterprise operating in the West Contra Costa County area. As a result of the investigation, known as Operation Crystal Lens, agents of the West-NET task force coordinated a major enforcement takedown serving several search and arrest warrants throughout Contra Costa County, effectively dismantling a major drug trafficking organization in our communities.

The primary mission of West-NET is the investigation and eventual disruption and dismantlement of criminal drug trafficking organizations that impact our communities. The narcotic investigation team consists of law enforcement partners from local, state and federal law enforcement agencies in Contra Costa County. Operation Crystal Lens, in conjunction with a previous narcotic trafficking investigation in 2009, identified a criminal enterprise trafficking large amounts of methamphetamine and other controlled substances in Contra Costa County. Through Operation Crystal Lens, investigators learned the enterprise is a recipient of controlled substances from the Sinaloa Cartel. Law enforcement also found the criminal enterprise is involved in the trafficking of narcotics, firearms, the laundering of proceeds. The targets of the investigation have been identified as being connected to the Norteno criminal street gang.

During the course of the wrap-up of the Operation Crystal Lens 17 subjects were arrested for suspicion of drug and firearms related offenses. One suspect named Gabriel URTIZ is still outstanding. The Operation Crystal Lens resulted in the seizure of approximately 475 pounds of methamphetamine, with a street value of over \$17 million dollars, 158 grams of cocaine, valued at \$12,000, numerous firearms with high capacity magazines, U.S. Currency in excess of \$950,000.00, along with the seizure of numerous vehicles and motorcycles used to facilitate the trafficking of controlled substances.

This investigation would not be possible without the leadership and support of the West Contra Costa Executive Board and the delineated law enforcement and prosecutorial law enforcement agencies. The law enforcement agencies that make up the WestNET are in bold and identified with an asterisk. The other agencies listed below assisted in other key components of the investigation and apprehension of suspects and evidence.

West-NET Agencies:

California Department of Justice, Bureau of Investigation*

Contra Costa County Probation Department*

Contra Costa County Sheriff's Office*

El Cerrito Police Department*



WEST CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

Police Chiefs Association

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)*

Hercules Police Department*

Kensington Police Department*

Northern California High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)*

Pinole Police Department*

Richmond Police Department*

San Pablo Police Department*

Assisting agencies:

Antioch Police Department

Berkeley Police Department

California Highway Patrol

Contra Costa County Animal Service Department

Contra Costa County Child Protective Service (CPS)

Contra Costa County District Attorney's Office & Investigations Unit

Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)

Fairfield Police Department

Fresno Narcotic Enforcement Team

Madera County Narcotic Enforcement Team

Mendocino Major Crimes Task Force

Napa County Narcotic Enforcement Task Force

Office of Correctional Safety, Special Service Unit

San Francisco Police Department

Santa Clara County Enforcement Team (SCCET)

Solano County District Attorney's Office

Southern Alameda County Narcotic Enforcement Team (SACNET)

Unified Narcotic Enforcement Team (UNET)

U.S. Department of Homeland Security (HSI)

U.S. Marshals Service

U.S. Secret Service

Vacaville Police Department

Yolo County Narcotic Enforcement Team (YONET)

California DOJ PIO Contact Information: Michele Gregory 916-319-8283 cell: (916) 869-0413

San Pablo PD PIO Contact Information: Commander Jeff Palmieri 510-215-3275